

DECEMBER 2024

# CHIEF INFORMATION SECURITY OFFICER

EXECUTIVE POSITION PROFILE

**KANSAS STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

## The Opportunity

Kansas State understands the importance of a strong, secure and well-supported IT infrastructure in today's global society.

Kansas State University ("K-State") seeks an ambitious, collaborative, and innovative thought leader to serve as the inaugural Chief Information Security Officer ("CISO"). As K-State's first standalone CISO, this new leader will join the University at a time of tremendous growth and opportunity as the institution expands its reach and reputation. Reporting to the Chief Information Officer ("CIO"), the CISO will provide university-wide leadership for strengthening, maintaining, and professionalizing K-State's information security management program to ensure that information assets are adequately protected.

The CISO will develop relationships across campus, serving as an educator, facilitator, and trainer, ensuring that constituents feel well supported on issues of security and use. The CISO will lead a dedicated team of IT professionals, manage the University's cybersecurity strategy, and make key decisions on risk assessments, security measures, and tactical responses to emerging threats.

In 2023, Kansas State University launched a bold new strategic plan, *Next-Gen K-State*. The plan serves as evidence of the University's dynamic approach to the future of higher education. The strategic plan outlines how K-State will serve new kinds of learners, solve grand global challenges, and contribute to the economic prosperity of the state. A major component of the plan is elevating the University's research and discovery enterprise, with the goal of growing annual research expenditures to \$300 million by 2030. The next CISO will play a key role in actualizing these goals by supporting researchers and ensuring secure, effective, compliant, and efficient security measures and processes.

The ideal candidate is a thought leader, a consensus builder, and an integrator of people and processes. They will work with K-State's research community to support their success and specific timelines, providing clear and timely communication and removing barriers to support efficiency. The successful candidate will champion the concept that information security is a shared responsibility for every employee who has been entrusted with sensitive data. They will bring a sustainable vision to K-State's security efforts, keeping a pulse on industry developments and best practices. They will maintain a current understanding of the most highly effective digital platforms and programming and implement appropriate metrics to support effective and timely evaluations and business-value decisions. With an observant and advanced eye toward security, they will always remain vigilant about the IT threats to the University.

The next CISO will assess how to structure security within a complex environment. This individual will also bring experience with research organizations that prepares them to provide a vision to address the structural challenges facing tier one research institutions. This is an incredible opportunity to conceptualize and operationalize what excellence in cybersecurity can look like at K-State.

**For information on how to apply or to submit nominations, please refer to the Search Process section on page five.**



## Key opportunities and challenges for the CISO

The CISO will bring strategic and proactive leadership to K-State's technology security function, and, specifically, will work to address the following opportunities and challenges:

### ***Craft a vision and strategic priorities for K-State's information security***

One of the CISO's most critical opportunities will be developing a strategic and sustainable roadmap for enhancing cybersecurity measures. The CISO will build upon the University's academic and administrative strategic goals to establish cybersecurity as a key enabler in driving innovation and research output at K-State. The moment is ripe for advancing cybersecurity enhancements across campus. Being mindful of possible future security breaches, the CISO will conduct risk assessments and technology trend analysis to guide cybersecurity policy, tools selection, and infrastructure planning. Leading from within a distributed IT structure, the CISO will understand how to navigate the advantages and complexities of such a system and ensure that the necessary structure and resources are in place to support all the units. The CISO will lead with influence to obtain buy-in and support from constituents across the units in order for this vision to come to fruition and be successful.

### ***Manage the operations and implementation of enhanced security, creating a "security-first" campus culture***

Information security should be a responsibility that everyone at K-State respects and has top-of-mind when engaging with protected data. This is the culture the next CISO will promote and embed across campus. The CISO will underscore to the campus community the necessity of maintaining robust, effective, information security and a disaster recovery plan. To this end, the CISO will lead the construction of the University's information security policy, ensuring comprehensive cybersecurity measures protect against threats to both cloud and on-premises resources. They will ensure K-State has a privacy protocol framed around industry best practices and the needs of the University. With the constantly evolving and expanding threat landscape, the next CISO will bring a proven track record of managing organizations to promote high security standards. They will ensure that quality assurance and data security are optimized, oversee audits and risk management reviews, and provide the necessary support for prevention and mitigation actions.

### ***Provide efficient, effective, and safe research support***

The next CISO must understand the value, importance, and challenges of supporting world-class researchers while meeting the complex regulatory requirements of a research university. The CISO will need to analyze the existing processes and systems within the University and work closely with research administrators and faculty researchers to improve processes to provide maximum benefit to research units. The CISO will help determine what technological enhancements will make the greatest positive impact on the research enterprise. An advocate for a security-first approach, the CISO will balance promoting innovation with ensuring the differing needs of various units are met with the imperative to maintain compliance and protect university information assets. The next CISO will have the capacity to improve operational efficiency and the effectiveness of security service delivery to support the University's ambitious research goals.

### ***Build strong collaborations across the University and serve as an external spokesperson***

The CISO will build strong working relationships with key internal partners through open, direct, and transparent communication. Key partnerships with the IT Directors in each college, leaders within central IT, and research administrators across major institutes and centers, will be essential to establishing a shared vision and executing the next chapter of technology security at K-State. The CISO will collaborate with IT teams and academic and administrative departments to ensure the seamless integration and consistent application of cybersecurity standards and practice across all environments. The successful CISO must be a leader who can build bridges, problem-solve effectively, communicate regularly, and establish healthy relationships across constituencies. Establishing a collaborative customer service culture within their own team will also be critical to making strides in this space. To facilitate informed decision-making, the next CISO will provide expert advice to senior campus administration on cybersecurity trends, threats, and mitigation strategies. The CISO must also manage relationships with cybersecurity service providers in order to ensure that service level agreements are met and that services align with University needs. As research continues to grow at K-State, it is even more important for the CISO to be the external spokesperson for security on campus, communicating with funding agencies the level of security and standards of excellence that K-State embodies when it comes to securing their data.

### ***Lead, recruit, and retain the Information Security Team***

As the leader of the Information Security staff, the CISO should have a keen eye toward promoting skills and advancement in cybersecurity technologies, operations, and best practices. The CISO will leverage the skills and expertise of the team, provide opportunities for ongoing professional development, and make strategic decisions about staffing models. The CISO will promote the work their team is doing and encourage constituents to give focus and attention to their team's efforts. It is essential that the CISO be a vocal advocate for the team's ongoing endeavors in order to improve buy-in and compliance across campus. The CISO will foster a culture of security awareness, continuous learning, and adaptability within the team, aligning skill development with strategic needs and emerging threats. To be successful across campus, the Information Security team should be innovative, responsive, flexible, and committed to excellent customer service. There is increasing competition for technology professionals, and the CISO will be an experienced and successful recruiter of staff, seeking IT minds committed to furthering the success of K-State and being a member of the campus community.

## **Qualifications and Characteristics**

**The successful candidate will have** a bachelor's degree (master's preferred) in Computer Science, Information Systems, Cybersecurity, or a related field. They will also have many, if not all, of the following characteristics and qualifications:

- Extensive experience in developing and managing comprehensive information security programs, including but not limited to cybersecurity strategies, risk management, data protection, and compliance frameworks;
- Strong leadership and team development skills, with a proven ability to build, manage, and mentor multidisciplinary cybersecurity teams;
- Deep understanding of information security technologies, trends, best practices, and regulatory requirements, with experience in designing and implementing detection and response security controls and measures;
- Experience working in top tier research environments;
- Excellent project management skills, capable of leading complex information security projects, including security infrastructure enhancements, policy development, and response plans;
- Experience in vendor and stakeholder management, including service level agreement negotiation, and partnership development to support security initiatives;
- Strong analytical, strategic planning, and communication skills, with the ability to articulate complex security concepts to non-technical stakeholders and influence decision-making at the executive level;
- Demonstrated ability to foster a culture of security awareness, innovation, and continuous improvement within the IT department and across the organization;
- Excellent oral and written communication skills, with an ability to convey complex security issues to a non-technical audience. Proven ability to establish rapport, influence decision-making, and facilitate cohesive communication across all levels of the organization;
- Additional certifications in information security (e.g., CISSP, CISM, CEH, GIAC) are highly preferred.

**To learn more about Kansas State University, please review our [University Profile](#)**



## Search process

Kansas State University has retained the national search firm Isaacson, Miller to assist in recruiting its new Chief Information Security Officer.

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals and resumes with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website for this search: **Chief Information Security Officer**. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Upon acceptance of a contingent offer of employment, a candidate may be subject to a background check per [K-State's background check policy](#).

Applicants must be currently authorized to work in the United States at the time of employment.

*Kansas State University is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, age, national origin, disability, or status as a protected veteran.*

## About the institution

Founded in 1863 as the nation's first operational land-grant university, Kansas State is a Tier 1 research university with more than 20,200 students, 1,300 faculty members, 3,000 staff members and three physical campuses: the main campus in Manhattan; the Kansas State Salina campus, home to aviation and technology programs; and K-State Olathe, which serves the industry and workforce needs of Greater Kansas City.

K-State has nine colleges, Graduate School and K-State Online and offers more than 400 degrees and options, from bachelor's to doctoral degrees. K-State Research and Extension also serves the citizenry with a presence in every county throughout Kansas and supports research in more than 20 K-State departments. K-State has an annual budget of more than \$900 million. K-State is known for the passion and pride of its alumni. With more than 200,000 living graduates, the K-State Alumni Association has been No.1 in the Big 12 for more than 25 years, based on the percentage of graduates who are members, and No. 4 among Power Five conferences. Private giving to the university is around \$200 million per year, and the KSU Foundation has an investment pool and endowment of more than \$950 million. The university and foundation recently completed a major fundraising campaign that raised \$1.6 billion. The Princeton Review recognizes the university as one of the nation's best colleges. Kansas State also has been designated as an Innovation and Economic Prosperity University by the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and is recognized as a Carnegie Community Engaged Institution. Commonly referred to as K-State, the university is proud of its welcoming environment.





## University Mission, Vision and Values

The mission of Kansas State University is to foster excellent teaching, research and service that develop the highly skilled and educated citizenry necessary to advancing the well-being of Kansas, the nation and the international community.

The vision of K-State is that to lead the nation as a next generation land-grant university - setting the standard for inspiring learning, creativity, discovery and engagement that positively impacts society and transforms lives in Kansas and around the world. The university Values and Principles of Community guide how the community lives out its mission. For more information about Kansas State, visit our University Profile.



## Diversity and Inclusion

Kansas State University has a long, storied history of embracing diversity and inclusion as a core component of their educational mission.

As the nation's first operational land-grant, K-State has always admitted students without regard to race, gender, or creed. Their commitment to meeting the needs and interests of a diverse student body and preparing all constituents for meaningful engagement in an ever changing, diverse world is unwavering. They believe that diversity adds value to the educational fabric of their institution and students are encouraged to capitalize on the learning opportunities that differences can create. To learn more information about diversity and inclusion at K-State, please visit <https://www.k-state.edu/diversity-inclusion>.



## The Community

Situated in the heart of northeast Kansas' scenic Flint Hills, Manhattan's 56,000 citizens enjoy a dynamic community with shopping, dining, entertainment, and nightlife. Manhattan is affectionately known as the "Little Apple," a nod to its East Coast namesake, but has a vibrant culture all its own.

Here is just a sampling of what residents look forward to year-round:

- Shopping, dining, and socializing in Aggieville, a local entertainment district with a fun, energetic vibe.
- A vibrant, revitalized downtown area with fine dining options and local boutiques.
- The Flint Hills Discovery Center, featuring exhibits about the beautiful surrounding region.
- Beautiful outdoor life at Sunset Zoo and The Gardens at Kansas State University.
- Recreation opportunities at the Konza Prairie, Tuttle Creek State Park, Linear Park Trail and more.
- The university's McCain Performance Series, which hosts acclaimed Broadway musicals, comedians, musicians, and other entertainers.
- Exciting Big 12 athletic events (faculty and staff are eligible for discounted tickets).
- Colbert Hills Golf Course, ranked as the top public golf course in Kansas.
- Excellent K-12 education. The local high school ranks among the top 5 percent of U.S. high schools, and the district is home to several Kansas Master Teachers.

**Learn more about the Manhattan community at [manhattan.org](http://manhattan.org) or [madeformanhattan.org](http://madeformanhattan.org).**







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